

## APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF REPORT “INTERNATIONAL CORRIDORS OF CULTURE: ESTABLISHING A HERITAGE CORRIDOR IN THE CHAMPLAIN/RICHELIEU VALLEY”

87

*(Excerpt from Report prepared by Anne Drost for the National Park Service, 1998)*

### INTRODUCTION

A proposal initially put forward by Senator Jeffords of Vermont to recognize an international heritage corridor along the historic waterway and the adjacent lands of the Upper Hudson River, Lake George, Lake Champlain, and the Richelieu River (the Champlain/Richelieu Valley) is currently being studied by the National Park Service (NPS). A heritage corridor includes sites and landscapes that are both geographically and thematically related and provide unique frameworks for understanding the historical, cultural, and natural development of communities and their surroundings; its secondary purpose is to enhance the economy by encouraging tourism development. Linked together, the rich cultural landscapes and historic sites in the Champlain/Richelieu Valley recount an important part of the formative history of the United States and Canada and the relationships among early French and English explorers and settlers, First Nation peoples, and the natural landscape.

Preliminary discussions regarding this cross-boundary initiative have met with great interest. Participants have included U.S. federal officials, Canadian federal officials, state officials of New York and Vermont, and officials of the Quebec government. The International Corridor initiative clearly has great potential for improving the promotion and protection of cultural and natural resources and further solidifying cross-boundary relations. However, before proceeding further towards formally recognizing a Champlain/Richelieu Valley Heritage Corridor, several questions must be addressed concerning the process and protocol that should be followed in extending a heritage corridor across international boundaries.

This report has three purposes. First, given that heritage corridor designation is a relatively recent program in the United States, and little has been written on the subject, I provide a brief summary of the policy behind the program and the

procedures that apply. Second, my report focuses on the Champlain/Richelieu Valley Corridor initiative and describes, for the benefit of decision-makers in the United States, the administrative and legal framework in Quebec concerning heritage resources. Similar regimes in Canada and Quebec are described. Third, different international corridor models are analyzed, and several priorities and strategies are identified that would contribute to the realization of an international heritage corridor project in the Champlain/Richelieu Valley.

### HERITAGE CORRIDORS: AN OVERVIEW

Throughout history, people have created routes that they have used to explore new territories, move goods between different trading regions, conduct military expeditions, and settle communities. Some famous examples include the Silk Road of the Far East, the pilgrimage route from Rome to Lourdes, and the Mayan Trail through Central America. River and lake systems provide ready means of transport in and across many countries. The Nile, the Jordan River to the Dead Sea, the Ganges, and the Danube are examples of water routes that play a central role in the history and culture of societies.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in recognizing and preserving the natural and cultural values of these linear landscapes and in linking together events and sites for a better understanding of history as a dynamic and interrelated process. This interest is manifested in the increasing numbers of heritage corridors that are being recognized in many parts of the world and, more particularly, in North America.

Heritage corridor designation is a relatively new concept in the United States. At present, a general congressional enactment respecting heritage corridors and heritage areas does not exist. Draft legislation has been before Congress during the past two sessions but has not yet been passed into law. Yet since 1984, Congress has designated approximately seventeen heritage corridors and heritage areas through the passing of specific bills for each designated area.

## DEFINITION, GOALS, AND PROCEDURE

Heritage Areas are defined in draft legislation pending before U.S. Congress as follows:

*A place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in the areas. Continued use of National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped shape the landscapes enhances their significance.<sup>1</sup>*

This definition of heritage areas applies equally to heritage corridors, which is a term generally used to describe historic routes of transportation such as rivers or canals.

The policy underlying the creation of heritage corridors is that the historical context and the interrelationships among events and sites are as important, if not more so, than the individual parts alone. To build the links among heritage sites, partnerships must be formed among the various public and private entities holding an interest in these different sites.

Formal designation of a heritage corridor has three broad purposes: (1) to enhance and protect cultural landscapes and historic sites; (2) to improve historical understanding and heritage appreciation; and (3) to stimulate community and economic development.

Given the lack of a general legal framework in the United States, the process for designating heritage corridors is relatively flexible. The Department of the Interior acting through the National Park Service is normally involved at the outset to study the proposal and remains involved for a period of time to provide technical assistance and financial support. In the national program, Congress adopts a special bill that designates a region as a "heritage corridor" and assigns a management entity to it. The management entity is charged with preparing and implementing a management plan.

The steps involved in the process may be divided into four stages: (1) a feasibility study and site inventory is prepared;

(2) the corridor is formally designated; (3) a management plan is prepared and adopted; and (4) the plan is implemented and on-going monitoring is put into place. The process used in the United States to designate a heritage corridor is similar to the process used in Canada to designate a heritage river, as will be described below in more detail.

## THE CHAMPLAIN/RICHELIEU VALLEY REGION

In North America, the great water system of the Hudson River, Lake George, Lake Champlain, Richelieu River and St. Lawrence may be considered North America's most significant historic water highway. This large area delineated for the purpose of the NPS Heritage Corridor study includes the Upper Hudson River, Lake George, Lake Champlain, and the adjacent counties in New York and Vermont, as indicated in the map below. Across the border, the corridor boundaries along the Richelieu River to Sorel (or to Montreal) have yet to be defined through further collaborations with communities, officials in Quebec and in the federal government. To be consistent with the boundaries in New York and Vermont, it may be appropriate to include the Regional Municipal Counties or MRCs (municipalités régionales de comté). Four of these MRCs would likely fall within the boundaries of a heritage corridor that follows the Richelieu River from Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence River and includes the municipalities on either side of the River. These MRCs are: (1) La Vallée-du-Richelieu, (2) Le Bas-Richelieu, (3) Le Haut-Richelieu, and (4) Rouville.

The cultural resources in this region, both on land and underwater, provide a tangible link to a rich and diverse past. They include important sacred aboriginal sites dating from as early as 10,000 B.C. Lake Champlain and its rocks are integral to the Abenaki traditions and are central to their creation stories. The Lake and its tributaries have long served as important transportation routes for Abenakis, Mohawks, and Mahicans.

Samuel de Champlain sailed up the St. Lawrence and entered the Richelieu River in 1603. On a return voyage, he reached Lake Champlain in 1609. This marked the beginning of European exploration and settlement that intensified over the next two centuries.<sup>2</sup> Forts, shipwrecks, and historic landscapes throughout this region recount the history of French

## APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF REPORT “INTERNATIONAL CORRIDORS OF CULTURE: ESTABLISHING A HERITAGE CORRIDOR IN THE CHAMPLAIN/RICHELIEU VALLEY”

89

and English conflict in North America. This region may be considered as the birthplace of the United States and Canada. Infrastructures, such as mills, bridge, and railway stations, represent early development of industry, transportation, and recreation.

The designation and promotion of international heritage corridors in other parts of North America, and, indeed, in other parts of the world, assist greatly in the development of heritage tourism. Coupled with measures to protect cultural and natural sites, designation of a heritage corridor in the Champlain/Richelieu Valley would help bring significant long-term economic benefits to the region.

### CROSS-BOUNDARY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Cross-boundary management of natural and cultural resources in the Champlain/Richelieu Valley is in its early stages following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Governors of New York and Vermont and the Premier of Quebec in 1988, which was renewed in 1992 and 1996. This MOU provides, among other responsibilities, that the two States and Province will coordinate planning and pollution control to restore and protect natural and cultural resources in the Lake Champlain watershed. The 1996 Lake Champlain Management Plan, “Opportunities for Action,” was adopted following public consultations; the plan identifies specific goals for managing recreational development and promoting and protecting cultural heritage resources.

Heritage corridor designation of the Champlain/Richelieu Valley would complement the Lake Champlain Basin Program and help in implementing certain goals specified in the Basin’s Management Plan. Heritage corridor designation, however, differs from the Lake Champlain Basin Program in several important ways. First, the main focus of the heritage corridor is cultural and natural heritage values, while the Lake Champlain Basin Program has a strong scientific and environmental focus. Second, it is very likely that the geographical boundaries of an eventual heritage corridor would not be the same as the basin program, which is defined in terms of the Lake Champlain watershed. The boundaries of the heritage corridor remain to be fixed, but it is likely that they would be

narrower than the watershed and reach farther north into Quebec. Ideally, the boundaries for the corridor would include the resources that reflect the historical themes of significance that are identified for the Champlain/Richelieu Valley Corridor.

On September 8, 1995, Senator Jeffords of Vermont introduced the Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Study bill to Congress.<sup>3</sup> Although the bill was never adopted, the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the National Park Service, received presidential authorization to conduct an inventory of early settlement sites to determine whether heritage corridor designation is feasible. These include Native American sacred sites and the sites associated with American/Canadian and First Nation peoples history of exploration, conflict, and cooperation. Considering that the rich cultural heritage of the Champlain/Richelieu Valley has local, regional, national, and international significance, Senator Jeffords has stressed the importance of recognizing the common history shared among people living on both sides of the political border.

### ADMINISTRATIVE & LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN QUEBEC

Several multijurisdictional issues are raised over the management of cultural and natural heritage in the Richelieu River and along its banks. This section is intended to help assist U.S. officials in understanding how heritage resource management is organized in Quebec among the various levels of government and through several programs created in Quebec and at the federal level.

The federal government owns and manages a number of historical sites along the river that would fall under the themes of military history, early settlements, and transportation. These sites include Fort Lennox, Fort Chambly, Fort St. Jean, and the Chambly and Saint Ours Canals. The federal government also has jurisdiction over navigable waters. The Government of Quebec, regional, and local governments all have important roles and responsibilities in managing cultural and natural sites. Many sites in the Richelieu Valley are classified as Historic Monuments under the Quebec Cultural Property Act, including the Maison Nationale des Patriotes and the Lacolle Blockhaus.

Two programs created by the Quebec government may apply in the implementation of a heritage corridor in the Richelieu

Valley. The first program, the “politique culturelle” (cultural policy) is, in many ways, similar to the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program in New York and Vermont. It is available to both the MRCs and local governments in Quebec. As in the case of the CLG Program, the politique culturelle program works through the development of a partnership between the local or regional level and the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications (the counterpart being the States Historic Preservation Officer in New York and Vermont). The elaboration of a politique culturelle involves six steps: (1) organizational framework; (2) diagnosis and priorities; (3) public consultations; (4) draft cultural policy plan; (5) adoption of plan; and (6) implementation and followup.<sup>4</sup>

A second program that was launched in February 1998 and is also available to both MRCs and local government is called “Villes et villages d’art et de patrimoine” (Art and Heritage in Our Cities and Towns).<sup>5</sup> Under this program, the Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs have made available \$6.5 million for cultural and heritage projects. An individual, funded and specifically trained under the “Villes et Villages” program, acts as a facilitator over a period of three years in those region wishing to protect and better manage their cultural resources and develop cultural tourism activities. The Villes et Villages program and the politique culturelle both serve the same ends: the preservation of heritage sites and local community development. Both programs require partnership development.

### PARTNERSHIP MODELS IN QUEBEC

The existing precedent in Quebec for shared management of cultural and natural resources with the federal government is examined in this Report. Similar arrangements between the two governments may be made for a future Champlain/Richelieu Valley International Heritage Corridor.

In May 1998, legislation was adopted in the House of Commons in Ottawa and in the National Assembly in Quebec City to inaugurate the joint Provincial/National Park in the Saguenay/St. Lawrence region of Quebec. The Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park is the first park to be comanaged by both the federal and provincial levels of government in accor-

dance with their respective jurisdictions and in association with the local interests.

The park region includes only Quebec public lands and covers the entire bed of the Saguenay River from Cap à l’Est downstream, and the northern half of the St. Lawrence estuary located between Gros Cap à l’Aigle to Point-Rouge. The shoreline limit is determined by the high water mark (excluding flooding). A Harmonization Committee, made up of representatives of the Quebec Ministry of the Environment and Wildlife and the Federal Heritage Ministry, is established to ensure that the regulations, activities and programs respecting park planning and management are harmonized between the governments. The government partnership works closely with local, regional, and First Nation communities to incorporate their interests in park planning and increase public awareness and appreciation of the region. A Coordination Zone comprised of several local municipalities bordering the Marine Park has also been established to ensure appropriate use and development in relation to the park. To coordinate the activities of all the participants from riverfront communities, the two governments have established a nine-member Coordinating Committee.

This collaborative approach to natural and cultural resource area management provides an instructive model for an eventual Champlain/Richelieu Valley International Heritage Corridor, which, if realized, would be strengthened through the collaboration of multiple levels of government.

Another program, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) was established in 1984 by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to give national recognition to the important rivers of Canada, to conserve the best examples of Canada’s river heritage, and to encourage the public to learn about and appreciate Canada’s rivers. The system recognizes natural and cultural heritage values and aboriginal interests. CHRS is, in many ways, similar to the Heritage Corridor Program in the United States and the American Heritage Rivers Initiative that was announced in the 1997 State of the Union Address.

A board comprised of representatives appointed by each participating government oversees CHRS. Parks Canada and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development represent the federal government on this board. There is no

## APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF REPORT "INTERNATIONAL CORRIDORS OF CULTURE: ESTABLISHING A HERITAGE CORRIDOR IN THE CHAMPLAIN/RICHELIEU VALLEY"

91

transfer or loss of resources to the federal government through CHRS membership.

Designating a Canadian Heritage River is a two-stage process. First, a river must be nominated. River nominations may only be submitted to the board by participating government agencies. Private citizens and groups are invited to present submissions to the respective provincial or territorial member for their consideration. Public consultations normally take place prior to nomination and also once a "short list" of potential heritage rivers is developed. The area that may be covered in the nomination is not restricted to the river itself but may, in addition, include the adjacent land. Increasingly, CHRS is adopting a watershed approach in delineating heritage river boundaries. After a management plan is completed by the applicant agency and approved by the board, the second step in the process is the formal designation of the river. In this respect, CHRS differs from an U.S. Heritage Corridor as formal designation in Canada only comes after the management plan is submitted and approved.

The Quebec Government is in the process of creating its own Quebec Heritage River System. It is unlikely that the provincial system will be launched before the year 2000. The Province of British Columbia (BC) has already established a provincial Heritage Rivers program that is similar to the federal regime. This separate provincial regime does not preclude designating a river under the national system. In fact, the Fraser River in BC was nominated a Canadian Heritage River in 1997 after it had been included under the provincial system. The BC Minister felt that by putting the river on the national stage, its importance would be reinforced to all levels of government, business, and community groups.

### INTERNATIONAL CORRIDOR MODELS

To date, few international heritage corridors exist in North America, and there is no set formula for the establishment of an international heritage corridor. Three alternative approaches are considered in this section, including a discussion of their respective advantages and weaknesses: (1) the St. Croix International Waterway & Historic Site; (2) Los Caminos del Rio; and (3) Kennebec/La Chaudière International Corridor.

The St. Croix River forms 110 miles (180 km) of the Canadian/U.S. border between Southwestern New Brunswick and Northeastern Maine. In 1986, the Premier of New Brunswick and the Governor of Maine signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which recognized the St. Croix River as an International Waterway and provided for the establishment of a joint commission to oversee its management and protection. Legislation enacted in 1987 on both sides of the border translated the MOU into law. The management entity for St. Croix River, the St. Croix International Waterway Commission, is composed of eight members.

A binational heritage corridor, Los Caminos del Rio ("the road along the rivers"), was established in 1992 and extends 200 miles along the Lower Rio Grande River from Laredo to Brownsville, Texas, and from Columbia to Matamoros, Mexico. In 1990, the Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project (CRHP) was created to promote the development of the Texas/Mexico international river corridor. CRHP is part of the Texas Historical Commission, the state agency for historic preservation, which works closely with the Secretaría de Turismo and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia in Mexico. Twin regional nonprofit organizations with local inhabitants sitting on their boards oversee the project under a management plan entitled "A Shared Experience." In 1991, the Republic of Mexico endorsed the Los Caminos del Rio International Heritage Corridor project and assigned coordinators to tie the two sides together.

The Kennebec-Chaudière International Corridor extends from Quebec City to Bath along Route 173 in Quebec and Route 201 in Maine which run parallel, respectively, to the Chaudière and Kennebec Rivers. On May 1, 1998, Premier Bouchard of Quebec and Maine's Governor King announced the creation of the Chaudière-Kennebec International Corridor. The primary purpose of the corridor is to strengthen Quebec/Maine relations and stimulate local economies through tourism development. An interim committee was formed with public and private representatives from Quebec and Maine. This interim committee is composed, on the Quebec side, of provincial government officials in the Ministry of Culture and Communications, International Affairs, and the Regional Tourism Association, and local representatives. Representatives

from Maine include State officials, representatives from educational and cultural institutions, heritage professionals, and citizen volunteers. The Chaudière-Kennebec International Corridor is in its early formative stages. A funding commitment from the respective governments has not been made, and a permanent management entity has not been established.

The examples of international corridors described above illustrate that there are several approaches to establishing such cooperative frameworks. International corridors range from the relatively formalistic, legislative model of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission to the loose partnership formed over the Chaudière-Kennebec, which, in effect, was made official by a handshake between Premier Bouchard of Quebec and Governor King of Maine. Los Caminos may be characterized as a hybrid model with strong national involvement on the Mexican side of the border and a State supported grass-roots organization in Texas.

In considering what may be an appropriate process and management structure for an eventual Champlain Valley/Richelieu River International Heritage Corridor, we can learn a great deal from the other models.

## MOVING FORWARD

Preserving and promoting the cultural and natural heritage sites in the Champlain/Richelieu Valley and linking pieces of history together across international borders is no small challenge. The challenge lies in the development of a meaningful partnership among the different levels of government in New York, Vermont, and Quebec and among the people living in the diverse communities in the region.

There is a need to develop a Champlain/Richelieu Valley Corridor identity, both from within the region and from outside the region, which would appear to be lacking at present. A sense of belonging or a corridor community identity will help ensure that the proposed international corridor is perceived to—and will in fact—serve a useful role in regional development, which is one of the primary objectives of the corridor.

Building community support is based on four main elements: communication, education, direct community involvement, and partnerships. For each, strategies and specific actions may be conceived which would work towards building community support and opportunities for collaboration and development. Existing international corridor models provide several examples of actions that may be taken to this end. These examples may be tailored to respond to the particular geographic and social circumstances of the Champlain/Richelieu Valley.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> H.R. 3005, a draft bill to establish guidelines for the designation of National Heritage Areas. Although Congress has not passed this bill, it provides a useful working definition for the concepts of heritage areas and heritage corridors.
- <sup>2</sup> William Haviland and Marjorie Power, *The Original Vermonters* (1981). Samuel Eliot Morrison, *Samuel de Champlain: Father of New France* (1972).
- <sup>3</sup> 104th Congress, 1st Session, § 1225.
- <sup>4</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, *Guide d'Élaboration et de mise en oeuvre d'une politique culturelle municipale* (1997).
- <sup>5</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, *Villes et villages d'art et de patrimoine: Document d'information* (Février 1998).